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SUBJECT: BREATHING LIFE INTO THE U.S.-TURKEY STRATEGIC  
DIALOGUE

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Secretary Rice and Turkish FM Gul have put their imprimatur on the Structured Strategic Dialogue. We must now implement it. Over the next six months, we should focus on some of the most pressing bilateral and regional issues through continued high-level dialogue, consultations and stepped-up exchanges.

¶2. (C) Iraq: Hard work by this Mission and Washington to consult and cooperate on Iraq have transformed a big problem in US-Turkish relations into a positive. Turkey is closely engaged in efforts to democratize and stabilize Iraq. It is working to open a consulate in Mosul. Iraqi FM Zebari just visited Turkey; we continue to encourage PM Erdogan and FM Gul to reciprocate with travel to Baghdad. The last bilateral experts talks took place in Washington in March. We urge that Ambassador Satterfield include Ankara on his first trip to the region after taking up his new position in Washington. We would also welcome consultations here by NSC Senior Director Meghan O'Sullivan. If neither is possible soon, we will encourage Turkey's Iraq Coordinator, Oguz Celikkol, to consider a visit to Washington by early fall.

¶3. (C) Iran: One reason the GOT is firmly on side with us in our diplomatic efforts regarding the Iran nuclear issue is that we have consulted regularly with it, thanks in particular to IAEA rep Greg Schulte and NEA DAS Gordon Gray, as well as the Secretary's many conversations with FM Gul in recent weeks. As the diplomacy proceeds in August and into the early fall, a visit by U/S Burns would match the consultations held here by other P5-plus-1 Political Directors. It would help ensure continued tight coordination on the issue. We know the competition for U/S Burns' time. Other senior Administration officials consulting here can accomplish much the same purpose. We could also arrange an early visit to Washington by D U/S Akgunay.

¶4. (C) MEPP: The Turks have sometimes been helpful on the Middle East issues, but this is an area where distrust, misunderstandings and disingenuousness have led to problems. Recognizing that the current crisis means decision makers' time is very limited, we would suggest an invitation for MFA A/S equivalent Ahmet Uzumcu to visit Washington in August. Uzumcu is smart and knows the Middle East well. Circumstances permitting, including Ankara in any additional travel to the region by A/S Welch and NSC Senior Director Abrams itinerary would be positive.

¶5. (C) Policy Planning: Our strategic vision document specifically calls for policy planning talks. We are doing well in terms of tactical cooperation with Turkey on various issues, but could benefit by engagement on a more strategic level. We should move soon to schedule policy planning talks

led by S/P Director Stephen Krasner before the end of the year. We should work to flesh out an agenda in advance with the Turks to ensure these talks are productive and focused.

¶6. (C) NATO: The North Atlantic Alliance remains our primary and most active security tie with Turkey. While our delegations are in frequent contact in Brussels, a high level contact here could help prevent Turkish mischief in the run-up to Vilnius. We would particularly like to see USNATO Ambassador Nuland here.

¶7. (C) EU: Consultations on Turkey's EU accession process could be helpful. One way to pursue this would be to arrange talks between appropriate Turkish officials here and USEU Ambassador Gray or DCM McKinley either in Brussels or in Ankara. Such talks could give our US team that works with the EU additional texture on Turkey's perspective, its progress on the various political, economic, Cyprus-related and other issues, and the problems. Personal connections could also reinforce the connections with Turkey that we in Ankara and our colleagues in Washington have.

¶8. (C) Economic Cooperation Partnership Council: Political and foreign policy issues are at the heart of our interests here, but economic, trade and investment ties are important, too. This is especially so in light of the financial turbulence that has affected Turkey recently. It is time to breathe life into the ECPC by scheduling a meeting led by U/S Shiner -- or by A/S Sullivan if she is not available this fall. Turks reacted well to the idea of an early ECPC when A/S Sullivan raised it during talks here July 14. They agreed with Sullivan's idea of including strong representation from the economic ministries. We should consult further on the agenda. The Turks suggested trade, investment, collaboration regarding third markets, and

science and technology. Either as part of the ECPC or separately, we believe it would be useful to have a dialogue on energy issues.

¶9. (C) High Level Defence Group (HLDG): At the time of the first HLDG in many years last October, both sides pledged to meet again at that level more frequently. Other commitments have conspired to make that impossible. We are working now to schedule the next session; it may be in November. The HLDG could very helpfully be preceded by a visit from DOD A/S Flory to set the stage, if possible. Army COS Gen. Schoonover plans to visit in late October, and we hope this will help to bolster flagging Army-to-Army ties, especially if it can be supplemented by a visit here of USAREUR General McKiernan, who we believe has not visited Turkey in his current position. Turkish D/CHOD Kosaner has been invited to Stuttgart by EUCOM General Ward. We would also welcome a visit this fall by SACEUR General Jones, whose talks in Ankara in September 2005 provided very helpful tonic to US-Turkish mil-mil relations. We would also welcome the new SACEUR after the changeover, perhaps in early 2007.

¶10. (SBU) Expanded exchange programs offer another, more personalized avenue to deepening ties and understanding. We are anxious to pursue the following two angles:

-- Parliamentary Exchanges: Another important item on our bilateral agenda is an expansion of parliamentary exchanges. This would have the dual advantage of educating Turkish members of parliament in how Congress works -- election-time visits, including to districts, would be particularly enlightening for them -- and allow Members of Congress to learn more about an important ally. We propose that Washington consider establishing and funding a parliamentary exchange project along the lines of the Atlantik-Bruecke, which has been so valuable in cementing German-American parliamentary ties. We earlier proposed this to U/S Hughes and believe it is a project that would more than pay for itself in terms of increased understanding and dialogue. As a Mission, we stand prepared to provide any support required.

-- Expanded High School Exchanges: With public opinion in

Turkey downbeat on America, expanding high school exchanges through existing mechanisms would open a window on America to Turkish youth. Some of us are former exchange students, and we strongly believe that the value of such programs -- including their multiplier effects when students return and educate their friends and family about what America is really about -- is incalculable. As with the parliamentary exchanges, we have requested a substantial funding increase from R.

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